SOVIETBORGS



Píxel a Página

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CHAPTER ONE

”How was it, Grandpa? Tell me again how we survived the end of the world.”

Vladimir, the seventy-two-year-old man who looked almost ninety, looked at her knowingly and gave a tired smile.

“I’ve explained it to you many times, Nadia. When I was young, the West betrayed us through a terrible act. They wanted to destroy our beloved Russian homeland, but we resisted.”

Nadia Buronowsky was blonde and extremely fair-skinned. Very astute and studious, she couldn’t help but question everything she was taught at school.

“That was in 1989, wasn’t it, Grandpa?”

“You know it was. November 9, 1989, was when those American imperialists reached the height of their fanaticism. They tried to launch their nuclear weapons against our country.”

The apartment was small and modest, with paint on the walls cracked and peeling. The linoleum floor creaked with every movement. Leningrad’s afternoon light, filtered through the curtain, streamed through the living room window and illuminated the wooden table where Nadia and her grandfather shared a can of Baikal cola.

“But why didn’t they succeed, Grandpa? Why, instead of wiping us out, did they destroy themselves and wipe out their entire capitalist world?”

“They launched their missiles against us, but our homeland resisted. Thanks to the bravery of our soldiers and Soviet technology, we survived. The West was destroyed by its own evil.”

Nadia turned her gaze to the wall to avoid her doubts. An Orthodox icon and a 2014 calendar with the image of Tovarishch-Prime, his serene digital face against a red background, reminded her of unity and obedience.

“And why now...?” Nadia started to say, but fell silent.

“Why what, little one?”

“I don’t know... Why aren’t people happier now?

If the bad guys already lost, right?"

"The price we pay for our world is high, Nadia. The *prizráki*[1] of the capitalists still roam the Earth. And even though their weapons didn't hit our homeland, collateral damage still exists."

Nadia looked at her grandfather with a puzzled expression, but she kept quiet.

"Don't push this topic too much," Vladimir advised her, stroking her cheek with the back of his wrinkled fingers. "It's not good for you to bring this up unless it's with me, okay?"

She nodded, pretending to be convinced. She finished the last of her cola and went to look at the illustrated story she had left on the couch.

"What story is that?" Vladimir wanted to know, pleased with the change in the little girl's attention.

"Basilisa the Beauty," she answered, showing him the cover.

"Perfect. I'm sure you'll like it."

Nadia glanced sideways at her grandfather, who was in poor health. She didn't want to upset or bother him. Although she had read that old tale many times, she pretended to enjoy it again with fresh attention, to please him.

She knew it was fiction, a story made up for children like herself.

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1 Russian word meaning "ghosts" or "specters."

And she also knew that stories could be everywhere. Like the whole story her grandfather had told her. And everything about the Sovietborgs.

* * *

The zombie exploded in front of Grom-7. When fired upon at such close range, those grotesque creatures simply disintegrated in a burst of putrid flesh. The Soviet Borg who had dispatched it hadn't strayed far from his two companions. They always operated in squads of three, rarely separating far enough to lose visual contact.

Grom-7 focused his cybernetic eye over the rocky ruins and spotted Krasny-4. He didn't need his enhanced vision—with normal optics he could make out Volna-9 to his right. Both comrades accounted for.

He cut an impressive figure, even by Soviet Borg standards. Like every member of this elite red army, he was a hybrid unit—half human, half machine—distinguished by far more than that unusual fact alone. His crimson helmet encompassed most of his head, leaving only the mouth area exposed as the final vestige of his humanity. His pronounced jaw appeared granite-hewn but was forged from volgarit, the hardest material in the USSR's technological arsenal. He was, in essence, a scarlet colossus.

The zombie's shattered remains had splashed into a puddle, where Grom-7 caught his own reflection with startling clarity. He rarely contemplated his appearance. He certainly didn't check mirrors each morning, and his self-awareness was largely constructed from observing his companions—particularly Krasny-4 and Volna-9—as well as other Sovietborgs he'd encountered in the field.

He moved his cannon-arm while studying his reflection, almost childlike in ensuring the image staring back was truly his own. His entire form was encased in high-tech crimson armor. The primary plates combined steel and tungsten for durability and radiological shielding. He knew additional bismuth alloys were integrated throughout, along with what he believed were barium sulfate compounds in critical zones—all engineered to block radiation without introducing toxicity.

A Soviet Borg was, fundamentally, a living marvel designed to withstand the radioactive fallout from American nuclear strikes detonated years prior. Grom-7 couldn't decide whether to feel pride or resignation about possessing such capabilities. His frame incorporated internal reinforcements, concrete composite structures, and specialized polymers in fixed modules. They were, quite simply, the only operational units capable of surviving this post-apocalyptic wasteland.

“No more stragglers out there, right, tovarisch?”

His squad mate Krasny-4’s voice carried across the ruins. They could have used internal comms, but often preferred direct speech—as if hearing their own voices echoing might confirm they remained human.

“Affirmative. Looks like after clearing the last portal gates, we’ve eliminated all the damned undead.”

Grom-7 surveyed the devastated landscape. Ruins jutted from the earth like wounded flesh—towers of concrete and twisted steel, shrouded in rust and withered vegetation. The air shimmered with radioactive mist that painted the sky a nauseating green. Scattered pools of stagnant water reflected the eerie glow of radioluminescence.

The ground yielded beneath his boots—a treacherous mixture of debris and glass shards—while the destroyed portal remnants still smoldered, leaving dark wounds in the earth where hordes of radioactive zombies had recently emerged. In the distance, collapsed transmission towers and stripped cables dangled from skeletal buildings, their residual electrical hum singing like whispers from another world.

His gaze shifted to Volna-9, their female squad member. A Soviet Borg as integral to the new socialist order as any male soldier. “Woman is as capable as man,” proclaimed the Red Army’s recruitment posters, and this elite “cleaner” program served as living

testament. Grom-7 had witnessed firsthand how these heroines defended the motherland with equal valor and technological prowess as their male counterparts.

She knelt with her back turned, examining the rubble and corrosion of this desolate terrain. The day's dying light, filtered through radioactive haze, traced the contours of her legs beneath their volgarit-steel plating—material as resilient as it was striking in the wan illumination. Her armor's design merged function with form, accentuating both the power and grace of her silhouette—a fusion of mechanical might and feminine elegance.

Grom-7 looked away, unsettled by this sudden surge of humanity that both thrilled and disturbed him in equal measure.

The silence was broken only by the crunch of debris beneath Volna-9's boots and the residual hum of the now-dormant portals. Not a trace of the zombies remained—only solitude and the weight of victory in a world where nuclear catastrophe had erased nearly every vestige of the past from these lands, save for memories of what once had been.

"Are those horses?" asked Krasny-4 incredulously, having approached Grom-7. He pointed toward a specific spot. "Was that a damned statue with horses? And what the hell is that thing?"

Grom-7 had no answer. He knew this mission

corresponded to a former human colony in quadrant 343, but he hadn't bothered gathering details—irrelevant to their objectives.

"It was a copper quadriga. Horses pulling a chariot," Volna-9 replied confidently, now just steps away from them. "And that half-melted, dented head must have been the goddess Victory."

Both male Sovietborgs nodded silently.

"You never review the supplementary data," she chided them. "This was the Brandenburg Gate."

Grom-7 lowered his head. He had no clue what she was referring to. His gaze wandered to a weathered tourist sign, dust-covered and half-torn from the wall. Against the faded background, large colorful letters still proclaimed an ancient slogan:

"Entdecke Berlin – Discover Berlin"